



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



SDDVA HOSTS ANNUAL MINI CONFERENCES

This week, the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs hosted Mini Conferences in Hot Springs, Pierre, and Yankton.

SDDVA's Program Manager Heather Bullerman and State Veterans Service Officer Dusty Abrahamson traveled the state and briefed County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers on issues relating to veteran's benefits.

During the mini conferences, staff conducted training on topics CTVSOs requested during the annual benefits school. Most of the training focused on how to fill out pension forms once D2D is implemented on pension claims, when to file an EVR or annual unreimbursed medical expenses, special benefits available to veterans who are 100% P&T disabled, Notice of disagreements.

Abrahamson also gave a class on hot topics that were requested by the C/TVSOs that included; Gulf War Veterans, Yellow Ribbon topics, Choice Act/MILBILL/outsource, proposed reductions, new VA Form 21-22, and School Child Forms.

SDDVA's 2017 Benefit School will be held in Pierre August 14-17.



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BRAVO BATTERY HOSTS DINING OUT

Last weekend Bravo Battery of the 147th Field Artillery held their first formal dining out. SDDVA Field Officer Michael Maske attended and visited with veterans, soldiers and family members about benefits and services.

Lt. Gov. Matt Michels, a Yankton native and U.S. Navy veteran, served as the guest speaker for the celebration. He commended Bravo Battery and their families for their selfless service. His words included resiliency, selfless service and the coming together to serve each other, our communities, and our nation.

The evening was filled with time honored military traditions that go along with most military dining outs to include ceremonial toasts, and some trips to the grog bowl. Numerous ceremonial toasts were made to recognize those currently serving overseas and many fallen soldiers.

The evening concluded with also an amazing reenlistment ceremony for two soldiers in the unit. The ceremony was conducted by LTC Phil Stiles. Stiles gave a resonating speech explaining the truth, depth, and seriousness of the oath, and instructed the other member of the unit to raise their right hand and reaffirm their oath at the same time their fellow soldiers were re-enlisting. Stiles served as the previous commander for then-Charlie Battery (Stationed in Yankton at the time) when they deployed to Iraq.



SOCIAL SECURITY LAUNCHES NEW SERVICE

In December, Social Security will launch a new service for **mySocial Security** account holders where the public can check on the status of an application for benefits or an appeal filed.

This new addition to the **mySocial Security** suite of services will provide detailed information about retirement, disability, survivors, Medicare, and Supplemental Security Income claims and appeals filed either online at socialsecurity.gov or with a Social Security employee.

The service will provide important information about your claim or appeal, including:

- Date of filing;
- Current claim location;
- Scheduled hearing date and time;
- Re-entry numbers for incomplete applications;
- Servicing office location; and
- Claim or appeal decision.

Customers can still check the status of their benefit applications by phone, by calling 1-800-772-1213, and providing the confirmation number they received when they filed their claim.

Providing customers with more claim status information helps SSA meet their goal of delivering innovative, quality services to you and helping secure today and tomorrow.

For more information about how to open an account, please visit: www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount. If you have any questions, feel free to email SSA at oea.net.post@ssa.gov.

my Social Security

Your Online Account... Your Control...

Have you checked out **my Social Security**?

You can create an online account and see your earnings record. Even if you're not getting benefits right now, you can see how much you could get when you retire. It's all right here, at your fingertips.



www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount



IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS

Elves from Ellsworth Air Force Base were at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home last week to help decorate for the holidays.

We are thankful for all the individuals, groups, organizations and associations that ensure our veterans have a happy holiday season.

From gifts, to food, to entertainment, to decorating; we are truly blessed for all that give so much during



this holiday season. The greatest gift you can give someone is your time. It's like you're giving the portion of your life that you can never get back.



VA LAUNCHES VETS.GOV LOA3

As part of the MyVA transformation process The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is taking initial steps to increase veterans' online security. Data breaches in the public and private sector have compromised the personal data of millions of Americans. The VA recognizes the need to take further action to enhance our online safeguards to protect the privacy and confidentiality of our veterans. With this concern in mind the VA has added a logon feature to vets.gov. The vets.gov logon is one of the few government—and private sector!—logon accounts that meets the highest and most up-to-date levels of security guidance and requirements (level of assurance (LOA 3) for identity proofing that has been mandated for VA and other government agencies.

This is the highest level of security used to protect user data and privacy, making the VA a leader in both the government and private sectors with an LOA 3 logon account. Veterans can begin the two-step registration process for a Vets.gov account by using their DS Logon Premium credential or registering for an ID.me credential through the vets.gov homepage. Veterans can complete the second step using various methods, including using a picture of a driver's license. Veterans who sign up for an account will have access to redesigned eBenefits and My HealtheVet tools and services such as the Disability Claims Status Tool, prescription refill service, and secure messaging to their healthcare team.

Veterans can still access eBenefits and My HealtheVet for these services, but users who sign up for Vets.gov will benefit from a redesigned homepage that gives veterans quick access to popular tasks and will see enhanced navigation to many of the VA's key

online features that were previously spread across various sites, requiring multiple credentials." Additionally, as more features migrate to vets.gov in the next few months, veterans will be able to use a single user account and password to access all vets.gov services.

[VHA+Rx+Refill+and+Secure+Messaging+Blog+Post+FINAL.docx](#)

[Vets.gov+claim+status+blog+VBA+FINAL.docx](#)

[Disability+Status+tool+Fact+Sheet+FINAL+%282%29.docx](#)



GRIESE NAMED DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL OF US ARMY OF MSCOE

A Pierre man assumed responsibility as the next deputy commanding general - Army National Guard, U.S. Army Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, during a ceremony at Fort Leonard Wood, Dec. 2.

Brig. Gen. Kevin Griese, who also serves as the assistant adjutant general of the South Dakota Army National Guard, will serve in the dual-hat assignment and be an advisor to Maj. Gen. Kent Savre commanding general, U.S. Army MSCoE, for all Army National Guard issues.

"I am honored to have been selected for this position," said Griese. "There are a lot of strategic topics currently being addressed within the Army National Guard and I'm looking forward to participating in the process as we shape the future of our organization."

The mission of the MSCoE is to develop competent leaders and warriors of character and deliver total Army Engineer, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear, Military Police, and Maneuver Support capabilities to enable mission success across the range of military operations.

"MSCoE is also the proponent for maneuver enhancement brigades," said Griese. "There are 16 MEBs within the Army National Guard force structure and three in the Army Reserve. MEBs are a relevant and viable unit. We must continue to help the Army understand the value of MEBs and what they bring to the fight."

Griese was selected for the assignment through a National Guard Bureau nominations process that seeks to fill a number of limited key leadership positions nationwide where National Guard qualifications, service and experience is desired.

"General Griese's combat tour as commander of the 153rd Engineer Battalion, his subsequent command of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade together with his service as assistant adjutant general make him an excellent choice for this critical position at the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG.

Griese has nearly 35 years of service in the SDARNG and has held numerous command and staff positions within the 109th Engineer Battalion, the 153rd Engineer Battalion and the 109th Engineer Group. He also commanded the 153rd Engineer Battalion during its deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004-2005.

Griese is a graduate of the U.S. Army War College and served as the commander the 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) and 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

Griese holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and a Masters in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College. In his civilian career, he is the geotechnical engineer for the South Dakota Department of Transportation in Pierre.





HONORING OGLALA LAKOTA VETERANS: **Veteran Opportunities Workshop**

Dec. 15-16, 2016 • 8:30 am - 4:30 pm (each day) • FREE Admissions

JOURNEY MUSEUM, 222 NEW YORK ST, RAPID CITY, SD

Tentative Agenda

Thursday, December 15, 2016

- 8:30 Registration and Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 Opening Prayer and Welcome
- 9:30 Resources for Veteran-Owned Businesses
- 10:45 Housing Opportunities
- Noon Lunch Provided
- 1:00 Break-out Sessions on Veterans' Benefits
- 3:00 Health Benefits
- 4:30 Adjourn

Friday, December 16, 2016

- 8:30 Registration and Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 Pine Ridge Agriculture Economy – Agribusiness Opportunities
- 10:45 Substance Abuse Prevention Services
- Noon Lunch Provided
- 1:30 Mental Health Resources
- 3:00 Wrap-up and Resource Fair
- 4:30 Adjourn/ Spiritual Healing Ceremony (optional)



RESOURCE FAIR will be available on both days. **VA ENROLLMENT COUNSELORS** onsite.
Bring your DD-214 and a photo ID!

VETERANS: Contact Ramon Bear Runner at ramonbr@gwtc.net or (605) 441-5768 for more info.

ORGANIZATIONS: To participate in the RESOURCE FAIR or to become a sponsor, contact Joseph Kirk at joseph.kirk@sd.usda.gov or (605) 342-0301 ext. 228.

Akicita Yuonihanpi
HONOR THE VETERANS

114TH FIGHTER WING MISSES THE SURVEY LIST FOR F-35 FIGHTER

The South Dakota Air National Guard's 114th Fighter Wing at Joe Foss Field in Sioux Falls has not been selected for a site survey as a candidate base for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

The Air Force has selected five of 18 locations under consideration for the next round of F-35 basing. The 114th Fighter Wing was not among the five ANG units announced by Air Force officials on Wednesday.

The site survey would have been the next step in a long process for the 114th Fighter Wing to be selected as one of two Air National Guard basing locations for the F-35. The 114th Fighter Wing has a long and storied history of flying fighter aircraft and will continue to fly the F-16C Block 40.

"We are disappointed but know we are an outstanding unit among an outstanding community," said Col. Nathan Alholinna, 114th Fighter Wing commander. "The Air Force's reliance on and confidence in the 114th Fighter Wing remains as high as ever."




Veterans' Holiday Relief Drive

Benefiting homeless and at-risk Veterans and Military Families



Hosted by the
South Dakota American Legion Auxiliary
in partnership with
Autumn Simunek ~ Miss South Dakota 2015

Contribute "Buddy Baskets or Buddy Bags"

Buddy Basket Home-Warming Welcome Recipe: Assemble a

Laundry Basket/Waste Basket filled with: Paper Towels, Laundry Detergent, Household Cleansers, Rubber Gloves, Cleaning Sponges, Dust Pan w/Hand Brush, Light Bulbs, Flashlight, Batteries, Alarm Clock, Shower Curtain w/Rings, Bath Towel Set, Bathroom Tissue, Dishes, Eating Utensils, Dish Soap; Dish Towel Set
– Frosted with clear wrap, bow, and greeting tag

Buddy Bag Thank A Hero Recipe: Assemble a Bag filled with:

Personal Hygiene Products, Hand Towel Set, Shower Shoes or Slippers, Socks, Hat Gloves Scarf Set; Shopping or Salon Gift Card
– Sealed with a note or card of appreciation

Substitute, Homemade, or Single Household and Essential Items

Welcome: Bedding, Warm Apparel, Small Appliances, Thermos, Bottled Water, Sun Screen, Lip Balm, Bus Pass; Pre-Paid Phone Card

Monetary Donations: Checks payable & mailed to:

SD American Legion Auxiliary, Attn: Vets Relief Drive
129 North Main Ave. • Hartford, SD 57033

SD DROP-OFF LOCATIONS

November 11, 2016 - January 30, 2017

- Aberdeen - Area Chamber of Commerce • 516 S Main St.
- Sioux Falls - American Legion Post 15 • 1701 W Legion Dr.
- Vermillion - The Broadcaster/Plain Talk • 201 W Cherry St.
- Yankton - Area Chamber of Commerce • 803 E 4th St.
- Huron - Chamber & Visitors Bureau • 1725 Dakota Ave. S
- Mitchell - American Legion Post 18 • 107 N Main St.
- Hot Springs - American Legion Post 71 • 1045 Jennings Ave.
- Rapid City - American Legion Post 22 • 818 E Saint Patrick St.
- Sturgis - Area Chamber of Commerce • 2040 Junction Ave.
- Deadwood - Lawrence County Admin. Bldg. Lobby • 90 Sherman St.
- Spearfish - Area Chamber of Commerce • 106 W Kansas St.
- Black Hills Pioneer • 315 Seaton Circle



Thank you for contributing to
South Dakota's Veteran Outreach Programs!
Serving Veterans, their Families and their Communities
VeteransHRD@gmail.com or 605.890.3093



Upcoming Events

2016

Dec. 12—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony—Flaming Fountain—Capitol Lake—Pierre—11:00 am (CT)

Dec. 14—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Sioux Falls DAV—12:00 noon (CT)

Dec. 15—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Watertown American legion—12:00 noon (CT)

Dec. 17—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Rapid City VFW—10:00 am (MT)

2017

Jan. 10 - Governor's State of the State Address—1:00 pm (CT)

Jan. 11—SDDVA/Veterans Council Legislative Reception—5:00 pm—8:00 pm (CT)

Jan. 30—VFW Legislative Reception—AmericInn—Fort Pierre

Feb. 1—American Legion Legislative Reception—American Legion Post 8 Cabin—Pierre (520 S. Pierre Street) - 5:30 pm (CT)

Feb. 4—Valentines for Veterans Concert—Sioux Falls Washington Pavilion—3:00 pm (CT)

Feb 10-12—SD American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma

Jun 15-18—SD American Legion State Conference—Watertown

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